Ready to Read

An Early Literacy Newsletter

Renée Edwards, Early Literacy Services, Fairfax County Public Library

Children and Technology

Technology has exploded in the last few years, and tablets, e-readers, laptops and smartphones have become a regular part of our daily lives. It has c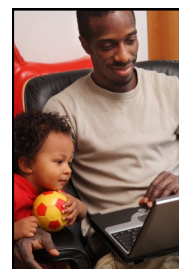hanged how we interact with print and gather information, and adults are introducing these devices to children of all ages. Screen time – the amount of time we spend in front of electronic devices – is increasing and this concerns many people who work with or have young children.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no screen time for children younger than age 2. At this stage of life, adults need to talk and read to children to encourage cognitive and language development. If children sit in front of televisions or use tablets and smartphones, this critical interaction may not occur. Other agencies recommend that child care professionals limit screen time for children ages 2 to 5 to fewer than 60 minutes a day and that parents limit screen time to fewer than two hours a day.

Most of the research agrees on several points: all videos and games should be developmental appropriate, promote academic growth and involve both child and adult. It is essential that we engage children in conversations about what they are seeing, experiencing and learning as they play games, watch videos or read books on digital devices.

The Fred Rodgers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media recommends the following when using technology with preschool children:

- Keep it hands-on, active and engaging.
- Make sure videos, books and games are developmentally appropriate.
- Use it to support learning.
- Use it in moderation.

When used in the right way, technology can enhance learning and prepare children for the digital tools they will encounter throughout their lives.

For more information:

Advice for Parents of Young Children in the Digital Age
www.fredrogerscenter.org/media/resources/Elearticle_041712.pdf

How True Are Our Assumptions About Screen Time?
families.naeyc.org/learning-and-development/music-math-more/how-true-are-our-assumptions-about-screen-time

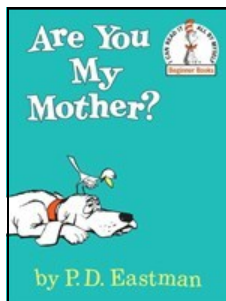**Selected Examples of Effective Classroom Practice Involving Technology and Interactive Media**
www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/PS_technology_Examples.pdf

Technology and Interactive Media as Tools in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8
www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/PS_technology_WEB.pdf

The Library Can Help

Fairfax County Public Library has a growing selection children's e-books. Go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library and choose "eBooks."

Are You My Mother? by P.D. Eastman
A baby bird is hatched while his mother is away. Fallen from his nest, he sets out to look for her and asks everyone he meets – including a dog, a cow and a plane – "Are you my mother?"

Cat on the Mat by Susan Schade
Cat dreams of being on the gymnastics team and spends all summer learning to tumble and flip.

Duck, Duck, Goose by Tad Hill
Duck & Goose, Goose & Duck. Feathered friends forever . . . or are they? There is a challenge to their friendship: a little whippersnapper of a duck named Thistle.

Dogs Love Books by Louise Yates
Dog loves books SO much he opens his very own bookstore. At first he's short of customers, but that is all right, because when Dog is surrounded by books, he is never short of friends – or fun. When customers begin arriving, he knows just which books to recommend.

Put Me in the Zoo by Robert Lopshire
Spot, a polka-dot leopard who can change colors and even juggle his own spots, tries to convince two children that he is special enough to be exhibited in the zoo.

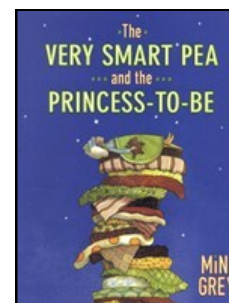**Snow Rabbit, Spring Rabbit** by Il Sung Na
When the snow falls to the ground and all the trees are bare, some animals fly long distances, while some swim to warmer waters. Some take a long, warm sleep where they live, while others have a thick, cozy coat and can stay in the snow. Learn about animal habits in the winter.

The Three Little Aliens and the Big Bad Robot by Margaret McNamara
Three aliens set off to find a new planet for themselves, but soon Bork and Gork have forgotten all of their mother's good advice and only Nklxwcyz builds a home safe enough to withstand the Big Bad Robot in this story reminiscent of "The Three Little Pigs."

The Very Smart Pea and the Princess-to-Be by Mini Grey
The pea gives its own version of what happened in the fairy tale, "The Princess and the Pea," from the time of its birth in the Palace Garden until it helps arrange a royal marriage.

Websites That Review Children's Apps and E-books

Common Sense Media
www.commonsensemedia.org/app-reviews

Digital Storytimes: Best Digital Book Reviews
digital-storytime.com

Little eLit: Early Literacy in the Digital Age
littleelit.com

Kirkus
www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/ipad

School Library Journal: Touch and Go Blog
www.slj.com/category/books-media/reviews/apps

Smart Apps for Kids
www.smartappsforkids.com

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12000 Government Center Parkway
Suite 324   Fairfax, VA 22035
703-324-3100
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library

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To request this information in an alternate form contact the Early Literacy Outreach Office at 703-324-8413 or TTY 711.